

GOD WORKS ADVERSITY FOR GOOD - Part 7 - Acts 23:22-35 – December 13th, 2009

- This is part seven of a series that we began a few weeks ago back in chapter 22 entitled; "God Works Adversity for Good."
- When you look at all that Paul is going through, you can see the fingerprints of God working everything for Paul's good and His glory.

13. By way of His protection (23:22-24)

22 The commander dismissed the young man and cautioned him, "Don't tell anyone that you have reported this to me." 23 Then he called two of his centurions and ordered them, "Get ready a detachment of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at nine tonight. 24 Provide mounts for Paul so that he may be taken safely to Governor Felix."

- v22 After hearing about this plot to kill Paul, the commander tells Paul's nephew to not tell anyone about what he just reported to him.
- v23 He then orders two centurions to prepare a detachment of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearman.
- v24 The commander tells them to provide mounts for Paul so he can be taken to Governor Felix in Caesarea at 9:00 that very night.
- God is providing for and guiding of the beloved Apostle and He does so by directing and protecting him from those vowing to kill him.

"Forty had sworn to murder him, but five hundred protectors are found for him. The angels of the Lord are round about his people, and the Lord can use a band of soldiers for the same purpose. The apostle left Jerusalem attended like a prince: his enemies were powerless to touch a hair of his head. He went down to Caesarea, and was out of reach of the daggers of his foes." Charles Spurgeon

- This plan is perfect, because God Himself is perfect. We could never come up with this, and there really isn't a better plan than this.
- By leaving at 9:00 at night, the city gates would be open to allow the military to leave, then, the gates would be shut until the morning.
- This made pursuit impossible because Paul would've arrived safely in Caesarea, about 60 miles away by the time the gates reopened.
- The Lord has just protected Paul perfectly from his very hungry enemy's, whose stomachs were probably growling with hunger pains.

14. By moving us on (23:25-30)

25 He wrote a letter as follows: 26 Claudius Lysias, To His Excellency, Governor Felix: Greetings. 27 This man was seized by the Jews and they were about to kill him, but I came with my troops and rescued him, for I had learned that he is a Roman citizen. 28 I wanted to know why they were accusing him, so I brought him to their Sanhedrin. 29 I found that the accusation had to do with questions about their law, but there was no charge against him that deserved death or imprisonment. 30 When I was informed of a plot to be carried out against the man, I sent him to you at once. I also ordered his accusers to present to you their case against him.

- v25-27 He writes a letter informing Governor Felix of the plot to kill Paul, but that he rescued him after learning he was a Roman citizen.
- v28-29 He tells how he had Paul brought to the Sanhedrin, but there was no charge against him warranting death or imprisonment.
- v30 He goes onto write that when he was informed about the plot to kill Paul, he sent him and his accusers to present their case.
- God is using the viciousness in Jerusalem to move Paul on to Caesarea in order for him to receive a fair trial, because he is innocent.

"One of Luke's prime motives in writing his twofold history is to demonstrate that there is no substance in this charge of subversion brought not only against Paul but against Christians in general - that competent and impartial judges had repeatedly confirmed the innocence of the Christian movement and the Christian missionaries in respect of Roman law."

F. F. Bruce

- Another commentator wrote; "Felix would understand why his legate in Jerusalem would want to defuse a Jewish religious squabble in Jerusalem, especially in the Temple courts. The best way was to remove the cause as quickly as possible. The Jews would not be nearly so likely to cause a disturbance at Roman Caesarea as at Jewish Jerusalem."

- Sometimes, God may choose to use the adversity in our lives to bring us to the place where we'll even consider that He's moving us on.
- If we're too comfortable in our Jerusalem, if you will, God may allow the adversity to move us on to the next place, our Caesarea.
- I suppose you could say that the window of opportunity for Paul to win His Jewish brethren has closed. It's now time for him to move on.

15. In our waiting upon Him (23:31-35)

31 So the soldiers, carrying out their orders, took Paul with them during the night and brought him as far as Antipatris. 32 The next day they let the cavalry go on with him, while they returned to the barracks. 33 When the cavalry arrived in Caesarea, they delivered the letter to the governor and handed Paul over to him. 34 The governor read the letter and asked what province he was from. Learning that he was from Cilicia, 35 he said, "I will hear your case when your accusers get here." Then he ordered that Paul be kept under guard in Herod's palace.

- v31-33 Paul is taken by the soldiers during the night, then when they arrive in Caesarea they deliver the letter and Paul to the governor.
- v34-35 The governor reads the letter, tells them he'll hear the case when his accusers arrive, then orders Paul sent to Herod's palace.
- What's interesting is, as we'll see in chapter 24, Paul will patiently wait for a trial at this beach front palace for a period of two years.

"[Paul] was not put in a public prison, but kept in a room of a palace built by Herod the Great. How he must have admired the manner in which the Lord protected him! Let us trust in God, and be very courageous for the gospel, and the Lord himself will screen us from all harm."

Charles Spurgeon

Isaiah 30:18 Therefore the LORD will wait, that He may be gracious to you; And therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; Blessed are all those who wait for Him. NKJV

Isaiah 40:31 But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint. NKJV